

Washington, DC – U.S. Congressman Mike Pence submitted the following remarks into the record of the U.S. House of Representatives, in support of H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012:

"I rise today in support of H.R. 4970, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2012, offered by Rep. Adams of Florida. I wish to extend my deep appreciation to Rep. Adams for her leadership in introducing this legislation and my heart goes out to her and all of the women across the country who have been victims of domestic violence.

"Each year, there are more than 200,000 victims of sexual assault nationwide. Sixty-two domestic violence deaths occurred in my home state of Indiana within a recent twelve-month period. As a husband to a wonderful wife and a father of two precious daughters, I strongly support efforts to end sexual violence and domestic abuse.

"The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was originally passed by Congress in 1994 to address rising violent crime rates against women, and in subsequent years we have witnessed a dramatic reduction in the incidence of domestic violence in this country. In 2006, I supported legislation to reauthorize VAWA, which added improvements to enhance sentencing for repeat sex offenders and require pretrial detention of child pornographers.

"While we have made progress in our fight against domestic and sexual violence, there is still work to be done, and that is why this reauthorization legislation is so important. Today's legislation continues our fight to prevent victims of these tragic crimes. It includes enhanced tools for law enforcement to arrest abusers and those who violate protection orders. It increases penalties for sexual assault and abuse. It funds programs to aid domestic violence victims seeking refuge from their abusers, and it promotes awareness in an effort to prevent these crimes from occurring in the first place.

"I urge my colleagues to support this reauthorization of VAWA and to support our continued efforts to combat sexual violence and domestic abuse."

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